

March 5, 2003

Opening Statement by Congressman Paul E. Gillmor
House Financial Services Committee
Full Committee Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2004 Housing Budget

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for holding this important hearing and allowing all committee members an opportunity to speak directly with agency officials regarding proposed budget levels for Fiscal Year 2004. I would also like to thank Secretary Martinez for making himself available to us this morning.

I look forward to learning the rationale behind the changes detailed in the President's budget proposal for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Specifically, I am interested in hearing more concerning the state-run block grant design for the Section 8 Rental Housing Assistance Program, as many of my constituents benefit greatly from such assistance.

Additionally, as the sponsor of the HR 2869, the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act, which became public law during the 107th Congress, I would like to hear an extended explanation for the elimination of funding for the Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI). As our witnesses may be aware, this committee recently approved HR 239, the Brownfields Redevelopment Enhancement Act, which would provide local governments with greater flexibility to rehabilitate brownfields sites, provided the BEDI program within HUD remains in existence.

Again, I thank the witnesses for coming before us today and look forward to an informative session.